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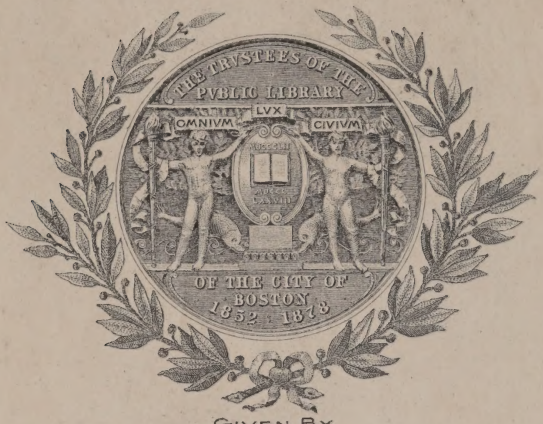

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DISCOURSES

PREACHED AT THE CHURCH IN BEDFORD-STREET,

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SUNDAY, MAY 2, 1852,

ON RESIGNING HIS PASTORAL CHARGE.

BY R. C. WATERSTON.

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DISCOURSE I.

Acts, xx. 32: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace."

Such were the words of Paul, in taking leave of the elders of the Church at Ephesus. It was a touching farewell. Nothing can be more beautiful or impressive than the whole account. The apostle speaks of his ministry, saying, "Ye know, from the first day, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons; and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and taught you publicly, and from house to house, preaching repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." He alludes to his many trials, but adds, "None of these things move me; neither count I my life dear, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus."

Few, indeed, can hope to have been faithful as was Paul; wonderful in all his gifts, and unwearied in his devotion. But in proportion as there has been Christian integrity and an earnest desire to promote the welfare of others, though there may be occasion for sadness, yet, even

in the hour of trial, there will also be cause for gratitude and joy. The close of any relationship naturally brings with it a feeling of seriousness; but in the termination of a union based upon Christian sympathies, and vitally connected with spiritual and eternal interests, the feeling must be proportionably deep. Few ties are stronger or more important than those which bind Pastor and People; and, when such a separation takes place, cold indeed must be the heart that suffers no pang.

It is, then, to me, brethren and friends, a very solemn thought that I stand before you for the last time as the Pastor of this Church; and that the relation which has existed between us for seven years is to be no more. To me, as well as to nearly all of you, this separation has come very unexpectedly. Let me speak frankly and fully. I knew that there was a heavy burden to bear, and that financial embarrassments existed, which were discouraging. Still I thought, that, by a strong effort, we might place ourselves in a more advantageous position, and afterwards go on successfully. With this view, in entering upon the eighth year of our existence as a Society, a letter was addressed to the Standing Committee, expressing the unabated interest which I felt in the welfare of the Church; and my conviction that the pressure of the debt was a serious trial; that it was not for the advantage of the Society it should continue; that, if it could be removed, there would be just cause for congratulation, and that then the Society would start with a fresh impulse. My hopes and affections had been, from the beginning, identified with the Church; yet so serious did I consider the evil of the

debt,* that I could not continue my present connection, unless it should be removed. The reply to this communication contained assurances of respect and affection; but, without holding forth hope that the debt could be removed, the letter stated that the subject should be laid before the Society. This, you know, was done; and a Committee was duly appointed, which, after much inquiry and earnest deliberation, presented their report,—stating that they found a strong affection through the Society towards the Pastor, and the same attachment that had ever existed; but that such changes had taken place in the community, since the erection of this edifice, by the removal of persons to the country, and from other causes, as to offer insurmountable obstacles to the continued growth, and, they thought, to the continued existence of this Church.

With warm expressions of attachment and regard, in their own name and in behalf of the Society (for which I desire here to thank THEM and YOU), they state that they are reluctantly forced to the conclusion, that, in the present state of the community, there is, at least, ONE EDIFICE TOO MANY, in this section of the city, for the wants of the population.

* In addition to about $40,000 subscribed (for which scrip was given, and upon which nothing has yet been returned), there is a debt of about $17,000, to meet the interest of which it has been necessary to raise $1000 annually, in addition to all other expenses of the Society. This sum has never been levied upon the whole Society, because, with the weight of the taxes, many persons would have been driven from the Church. It has, therefore, been collected from such members of the Society as could be induced to give. During the past two years, it has been very difficult to raise this sum; and, the last winter, it could only be obtained as a loan, with a lien upon the building: a state of things, it will at once be seen, ominous in itself, and ruinous if continued.

Taking the facts presented by the Committee, in connection with the financial situation of this Society, there seems no escape from the conclusion to which they came. And so decided was their opinion, — so clear the conviction of many persons of the soundest judgment in the Society, — and so strong the general expression which has been made on every side, — that it would imply a lack of Christian candor and truthfulness not to recognize it here; and the fact, painful as it may be, must naturally give a hue to the reflections of this day. Amid the unforeseen changes which have taken place, we have reason to rejoice in that Providence, which, from "seeming evil, still educes good;" and to be thankful in the thought, that, brief as our history has been, we have enjoyed much true Christian intercourse, and have not only sought to make personal progress, but to exert some influence for the good of others.

It is with a sad heart that I think of a separation. From its earliest existence I have been interested in this Society. Its welfare has been the cherished object of my thought. With anxious solicitude have I watched its growth, from the first planting of the germ to its present state. Its joys and sorrows, its hopes and its fears, have been my own. Winter and summer, by night and by day, has it been in my mind. I speak of the living Church, not of this external structure; of *you*, my friends, and of the spiritual interests that have bound us together. You know the pleasure with which I have met you in your own homes; of the enjoyment we have had in our social meetings; of the hours we have passed in religious counsel and prayer. Whatever might encourage spiritual improvement, or in-

spire to benevolent action, — these, if I know my own heart, have been the chief objects of my care.

We have met, not simply on the Sabbath as Pastor and People, but elsewhere as pleasant companions, and in the more private experiences of trial and grief. Our sympathies and hopes have been blended together; your children I have looked upon with affection, and the thought of your prosperity has gladdened my heart. Such ties cannot be broken without deep emotion, and there will be left behind remembrances that can never fade away.

It is fitting, on such an occasion, to review the past, which shall be done as briefly as possible. From 1839 to 1846, it was my privilege and happiness to be united with the Church first gathered by the venerated Tuckerman, and to labor among the people to whom he had ministered, as a Minister at Large. It was an honor and a joy to engage, even in the humblest manner, in so important a sphere; and the only difficulty I had ever found was, that devoting so many hours to active labor left less time than I could desire for private study. The wish had often been expressed, at different times and by various friends, that a Church might be formed, in which many could unite, who did not feel at liberty to attend constantly the chapel which had been erected especially for the poor; a Church in which there should be mutual sympathy, established on the broad principles of Christianity.

On the 19th February, 1846, I received a letter, in which it was stated, that various individuals had come together, with the conviction that their own spiritual needs, and the

good of society, demanded of them united action, and that they resolved to form a new Christian Church; that their object was not to promulgate any new or peculiar doctrines, but rather to impart such characteristics to their religious services, and other matters connected with the Church, as to render them practically useful. The letter concluded with a unanimous invitation to me to become the Pastor of this new Society; expressing also their interest in the work which at that time occupied my attention. Deep as was my solicitude for that cause, I knew that, wherever I was, I should carry with me the strongest interest in its welfare, and that I might still be able to labor for its advantage. And when I saw attached to that letter the names of two whom I had ever held in high respect, — one of whom had been among the earliest and most efficient friends of the Ministry at Large, and another who was the devoted Superintendent of the Sunday School connected with the chapel where I had preached during the whole of my ministry, and for many years previous, — not to speak of others, some of whom I had long numbered as personal friends, — these facts had much weight with me.

A letter was addressed to the Executive Committee of the Fraternity of Churches; and in their reply, after speaking most kindly of my labors, they said, "The dissolution of a connection which has been so grateful to us cannot but be a subject of regret; and for no light reasons, we are confident, would it have taken place. We see, and acknowledge with you, the strong claims of the new Society who have called you to become their Pastor, and respect

the decision at which you have arrived, of accepting their invitation. We most earnestly pray that the same Divine blessing may fall upon your future labors, which has caused your ministry with us to be so fruitful of good."

With such views, and encouraged by such expressions from those with whom I had most pleasantly been united, did I accept the call.

The first sermon was preached March 2, 1845. The first social religious meeting took place March 20. From the beginning, our number was composed of representatives from many churches, who united together in the hope of finding true Christian sympathy. We first met in Spring Lane, where the vestry of the Old South Church was granted us; then in Amory Hall, where we remained till the completion of the chapel.

It was considered desirable, in order that fresh vigor might be infused into all the services, to have prayers and responses in which the whole congregation might unite. In the summer of 1845, at the request of the Society, I compiled the Service-book, which was published in the autumn of that year, since which it has been constantly used in our Sabbath worship. This book has since been adopted by the Churches in Hartford and Chicago; and letters have been received, stating that it will be introduced into the new Church on the shores of the Pacific. Since the preparation of the Service-book, a smaller collection of services and hymns was needed for our social religious meetings, which I arranged, and published in the winter of 1850. The chapel was dedicated April 26, 1846, and in

May of that year every seat was taken. No doubts or difficulties hung over our beloved chapel! The sacredness of the public service was blended there with the tenderness of domestic worship. That *homelike* feeling many have never since experienced. This spacious edifice was completed and dedicated November 10, 1847. Many of you will remember the day. Christians of all denominations offered their congratulations, which, in fact, they always have expressed;* while the strongest fraternal sympathy was extended by those of our own faith. Animated by a love of truth, and full of hope that increasing good was to be accomplished, I prayed that God's blessing might attend us, and that all our Christian efforts might be crowned by success.

As the Saviour received into his presence the young, and gave them his benediction, so the Church should ever look with peculiar interest upon the lambs of the flock. With this feeling, and desirous that they should receive appropriate instruction, a Sunday School was organized as early as the 6th of April, 1845. There were present that day eleven teachers and twenty-six children. We have now a good school; and in addition to the classes for children, three classes for adults. During one season, I had much pleasure in meeting the children on Wednesday afternoon, during which time I gave a course of lectures on Natural History; and at times I have enjoyed meeting them at my home. The last time I met them there (I little thought then it was indeed

* The cordial expression of friendly feeling and Christian regard which I have ever received from clergymen of different denominations is one of the most pleasant remembrances connected with my past ministry.

the last time) was on Christmas eve, when their pleasant company and cheerful voices gladdened my heart. Fifty-five have received the waters of baptism. May that Being who raises up the different generations of mankind, bless all the children who have been brought to the altar, and all connected with this Society! May they be endowed with heavenly virtues, and defended by heavenly grace!

Varied, indeed, is the aspect of life. Now in the innocence of infancy and childhood, and then in the bloom of youth and the vigor of riper years, the procession passes. I have been called to officiate, since my connection with this Church, at the marriage of one hundred and fourteen individuals, or fifty-seven couples. At this altar I have welcomed to the Lord's table sixty-one persons: would that the number had been far greater! But of these there were some who had passed through deep spiritual experiences; the young with the ardor of youthful feeling, and the aged under the weight of years. I have seen the strong man melted to tears, as he has considered his past forgetfulness of God; and the infirm animated with a holy joy, through their faith in Christ. Thus, when they publicly professed their faith in the Christian religion, and their desire to be henceforth governed by its precepts, it formed an era in their life. May they ever look back to that event with unmingled joy; and may their light shine more and more to the perfect day!

There is one other record, — that which tells of the last change. It takes us to the sick chamber, and to the house of death. On seventy-four of these solemn occasions, I have offered the funeral prayer, and paid the last tribute of

Christian respect. Ah, what sad trials have been connected with such rites! The mother parting from her child; the husband separated from his companion; and the face of the venerable and beloved no more seen. One stricken down, without the warning of a moment; and another departing after lingering disease. At times a bitter struggle, and again the most peaceful trust. Many of you will vividly recall one who suffered for two years, before he was released; nearly all that time apparently on the verge of departure, and through all manifesting unwearied patience and faith.

Since my connection with this Church, I have preached seven hundred and forty times, and of this number five hundred and seven discourses have been delivered from this pulpit. There has been a religious meeting in the chapel every Tuesday evening, through two-thirds of the year, and meetings on Thursday or Friday evenings for the practice of sacred music or social religious conversation; and from very few of these, through the whole time of my connection with you, have I been absent. Of the meetings for singing, I have kept no account. I have the record of more than three hundred social religious meetings, with the account of the subjects considered, and the persons who made remarks. During the last winter, I have given a course of lectures, extending through four months, on the Old and New Testament, introductory to what I thought might follow at a future season. As a means of usefulness, a parish library has been established, which numbers three hundred and twenty-four volumes, forming a most valuable collection.

This Church has also gone beyond its own circle, and sought to do good by various methods of benevolent action. Within seven years, nearly ten thousand dollars has been collected and given in charity; about two thousand to the Ministry at Large; three thousand to the Meadville School; over seven hundred to theological students; nearly eight hundred to missionary purposes; one hundred in books for the West; and between two and three hundred to the poor; — making, according to the record which I have, $9,381.33. The children of the Society have contributed their mite, and have given to the Children's Mission, in all, one hundred and thirty-three dollars. In addition, there has been a Ladies' Benevolent Society, which has furnished a room in the Mariners' House twice; has given employment to poor persons, and given away over nine hundred garments in charity: some of these have been sent through Mrs. Barry to the Children's Mission, others through the Ministers at Large, and many distributed by the ladies of the Society to worthy objects. We might also speak of many of our Society, who have been engaged as Sunday-school teachers to the children of the poor; among that number, the Superintendents of the Howard and the Bethel Sunday Schools, and others associated with them. During the two last winters, the children from the "Home for the Destitute" have met with us here and in our Sunday School.

Four individuals who have been connected with us have gone forth as Ministers of the Gospel.* One has be-

* William H. Hadley, Adams Ayer, John M. Marsters, and Charles Lowe.

come widely known as a successful minister to the poor in Portland, where, but a short time since, I was called to preach the dedicatory discourse at the opening of a beautiful chapel erected for his ministry. Another is established in Chelsea; and one, who was for some time the faithful superintendent of our Sunday School, gave up that important office only when his duties as a minister of Christ obliged him so to do; and he carried with him the true affection of all who knew him.

Seven years ago, we met for the first time in the vestry at Spring Lane. We have hastily glanced at some of the events which have transpired since that day; but whatever has been accomplished has been in the face of trials and obstacles which were often hard to overcome.

It may not be improper briefly to hint at some of the difficulties with which we have had to contend.

1. From the time we entered this Church, the native population has been rapidly receding from this section of the city. Street after street, formerly filled with dwellings, have been given up to business, or become occupied by those whom we could not expect to attend a place of worship like this.

2. Not only has the Protestant population been passing away from this section of the city, but it has been passing away from the city itself. Many facts might be stated to illustrate this change. It was lately affirmed on high authority, before a legislative committee, that there are at least one hundred thousand persons who do business in this city who reside in the neighboring towns. The results brought about by the facilities of railroad communication

and other causes are well known. This Church has met with serious losses every year, through removals. Many most excellent and important members have left the city, and others are about to follow. More than one-third of those who signed the letter inviting me to this place have now been absent from the city some years. Of the sixty-one who have been admitted to the Church, nearly one-half have removed from the city. Some of the most active and important men who have ever been with us, and very many families which we had expected would have been permanently united with us, now reside wholly in the country. And this change is yet going on. Several families have stated to me that they should remove their residence from the city to the country during the present spring; and this has given, and now gives, a character of utter uncertainty, aside from all other considerations, to the whole Society.

3. Another hindrance has been, that, aside from removing permanently into the country, many of the families belonging to our Society are absent from the city through a large portion of the season, from May until late in the autumn. This breaks up the whole action of the Society, leaving but few to attend the deserted Church, and disheartening the minister in his professional labors. I know that clergymen generally throughout the city look upon the change which has taken place in this particular as a great evil, and a serious impediment to their usefulness.

4. Besides this, there are in our immediate neighborhood, five churches of our own faith, all of which have more than abundant accommodation for the wants of

the population. They are old societies, and have a right to live; yet they have suffered severely from the changes which have been named. I have never wished to build up this Society at the expense of weakening others. I have never sought to encourage any one to leave the Churches of my brethren, but have rejoiced rather in whatever might add to their prosperity.

5. Another hindrance to the growth of this Society has been the expense of the edifice. This is not said with any desire to reflect upon those who were instrumental in its erection. Their purposes were good and honorable; they were sanguine of success. They did not anticipate the unprecedented changes which have taken place. They gave to it their thought and their time; and some of them contributed with liberality towards its erection, and desired to do that which should be for the best interests of religion.

There has grown up in our community a strong and determined aversion to purchasing pews; and the very valuation of pews in this house has put it out of the power of many to purchase, whatever they might have desired. The taste of the people is for greater economy in Church expenditures; and many have no desire to attend a Church where the expenses are high, even if (on account of their inability to meet expenses) seats were granted them at a reduced rate. A feeling of just self-respect makes them repugnant to hold such a position. Many, I know, have declined coming to this place for these reasons; and others, who have come, have felt ill at ease. If the general expenses of a Society are far beyond the means of those who attend, it naturally creates embarrassment.

When I wrote the letter of offering my resignation, unless the debt were removed, it was my belief, that, if that could be accomplished, it would place us upon higher and freer ground, and we should be able to work to far greater advantage. I was well aware of the many and unfavorable changes which have taken place in this city; but I had been so long and intimately connected with the Church, and was so deeply interested in its welfare, that I was willing to labor on, in the midst of many discouragements, — not with the expectation of drawing a crowd within these walls, but contented to preach the gospel to that number who had already worshipped here, even though no others should be gathered in; though I firmly believed, and still have that conviction, that, had the debt been removed, arrangements might have been made by which many more would have joined the Society.

This, however, has been considered impracticable; and the Committee appointed by the Society state, that the result to which they came was on account of external circumstances, connected with the condition of the community, and which, from the nature of things, present insuperable obstacles, in their opinion, to the permanent success of the Society. This is the ground upon which my resignation was accepted,* and the reason why I am now called to speak to you these parting words.

We have looked briefly through the past history of this Church. Whatever has been done, has been accomplished in the face of these difficulties. I have deeply felt the trials which have existed; but my heart has been warmed

* See Appendix.

by hope, even in the darkest hour. My affections and interests have been here. I was with this Society in its day of weakness. I have passed with it through every struggle. Many of my dearest friends are here, who have given me, from the beginning to this hour, their sympathy and affection. May God bless them for it! Many of the poor have been here too; some of whom have been with me for twelve years, through the days of a former ministry. I shall always recall their fidelity and attachment as among the most pleasant remembrances of my life.

And now I stand here to bid you farewell. Painful it is to me to have a union of seven years brought to an end; to see hopes I have here cherished crumble, and bright visions which have passed before me vanish away; yet so it seems to be ordered.

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace. May the peace which passeth understanding be yours! May the spirit of Christ Jesus dwell in your hearts, and be manifest through your lives; and, finally, may an entrance be ministered unto you abundantly into God's everlasting kingdom!

DISCOURSE II.

Acts, xx. 32: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace."

Having, this morning, looked back through the seven years of our brief history, and considered some of the trials through which we have passed; the hopes which have cheered us, and the obstacles which have risen in our way; let us now consider some of the truths and principles which have occupied our thought, and upon which, as a Minister of the Lord Jesus, I have prayed that this Church might be established.

Knowing that we must account to God for the manner in which our duties are fulfilled, I humbly bow before his presence, and pray that I may have his favor, and be judged rather by what I have desired to do than by what has been actually accomplished. The grandeur of Divine Revelation, its momentous truths, and the purposes for which it was given, require the highest gifts and unwearied fidelity, if they are to be worthily presented to the minds of others. With the apostle we may indeed say, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Sensible of the greatness

of the work, I have prayed for the divine influence to quicken and direct me in my preparations for this place; and I desire to be thankful to the Most High for any measure of his grace, and that he has permitted me to witness so largely the power of his word. It is a solemn thing to stand before a people as a minister of the gospel; to speak, not to please men, but to meet the approval of Heaven. If I have kept back any known truth, or been neglectful of the just application of it, I pray that God may forgive me; and if any of you have been indifferent when God's truth has been uttered, or have impatiently rejected it, may our Heavenly Father forgive you! My friends, have we not all need of God's mercy?

The duties of a spiritual teacher are exalted in their character; and no sphere calls for higher talent or more varied gifts than the Christian pulpit. But grand as the sphere of the pulpit is, and inadequate as are the greatest powers fully to realize the important work which is set before the preacher, yet the gospel ministry is not solely for those of splendid genius. Men of extraordinary attainments, and a wonderful combination of powers, are indeed needed, and are raised up, from time to time, by an ever-watchful Providence; but, if it were left for such alone to preach the word, how many devout servants of Jesus, ready to labor diligently in his cause, must remain silent!

In the letter written at the commencement of this Society, expressing the purpose for which we were to unite, it was stated that spiritual life was your chief aim; that you desired to give prominence and effect to acknowledged Christian truth, and to have it applied to the heart and

conscience, in all the spheres and transactions of life; that you wished to learn to practise Christianity, and to have its blessed spirit infused into all the thoughts and actions of your daily life. Such a purpose I could not but honor; and, from the beginning, it has been my sincere desire to aid you in this work. "With regard to preaching," says the same letter, "we have nothing further to say, than that we desire it to be sound, earnest, practical, and pungent; to feel its power rather than to perceive its beauty; to be made good by it, rather than to be made satisfied with it." These were the views which led to the formation of this Society, and they were views which approved themselves to many Christian hearts. But external circumstances will often awaken new desires. That the sober and earnest statement of Christian truth is useful, no one will doubt; but whether it is likely to attract a multitude, and enhance the value of church property, may naturally be questioned. The object I have always wished to keep in view has been permanent good, rather than momentary excitement. The sight of a large assembly is, no doubt, gratifying; but where even two or three are gathered in the name of the Lord, he may be in the midst of them. One of the great dangers of a costly edifice is the risk of making temporal interests paramount to spiritual; and, if the expenditures are much beyond the means of the Society, the evil presses with a leaden weight, and motives of action growing out of such a condition of things will almost inevitably creep in. While the foundation of this Church was preparing, I said in the dedication sermon at the opening of the chapel, April,

1846, "It is not the PLACE, but the SPIRIT, which is most to be regarded. Not by pillars of chiselled stone, or in windows glowing with pictured forms, can we best show forth our gratitude and love; but by devoted lives, by humility of heart, by purity of mind, by uprightness of conduct, by an indwelling faith, by spirituality of character. God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

Deeply as I felt this then, I have felt it more deeply since. I have seen that here it was specially requisite to be remembered, and that we must be constantly on our guard if we would retain the true simplicity of the Christian character; and I have earnestly desired so to present the great truths of religion, that they might call into vigorous exercise both the understanding and the heart; that, by the inspiring promises and solemn sanctions of the gospel, every mind might be quickened into spiritual life. It has been my aim to persuade and instruct; to satisfy, if I might, the more sober judgment, as well as to awaken feeling; to touch the springs of character and of conduct, and lead the soul not only to the well-grounded hope of a heaven hereafter, but also to the enjoyment of heaven while here.

And what sublime and consoling truths are given to us for such an object; — GOD, — CHRIST, — IMMORTALITY! Where is there a mind that has power to exhaust themes like these? The ALMIGHTY, — his sovereignty, his holiness, his mercy; his justice, inflexibly exact; his benignity, without bounds; his wisdom, seen through the whole creation; his providence, extending over all. Even with

the tongue of angels, how could we adequately dwell upon such goodness, and glory, and power? Christ, — the divine Messenger, the appointed Mediator, the Redeemer of men; the way, the truth, and the life. Christ, with the transcendent beauty of his character, the matchless excellence of his teachings, and his offer of salvation. Christ, with his supernatural power, his healing touch, his authoritative word. Christ, — his birth, his baptism, his cross, his resurrection, his ascension to heaven. Christ, with his religion adapted to all men and to all time. Who can consider the Saviour, — what he was, what he did, and what he taught, — and not feel the whole heart moved to its profoundest depths? Inexhaustible are the riches which are in Christ Jesus. Have not our hearts burned within us as we have talked of him by the way?

And Immortality, — how vast the prospect! — stretching beyond the horizon of time, onward through the ages of eternity; with its exceeding blessedness or fearful retribution. That unending Future, is it to be our inheritance? O my brethren! at this parting hour, let the thought of immortality bear us heavenward. Let us realize what a destiny is before us, and feel its grandeur; and God grant that when all earthly temples shall have vanished, somewhere in the great universe, and in the divine presence, we may mingle our hymns of praise together!

Such are some of the themes, with the truths and principles growing out of them, that for seven years we have considered, — truths and principles based upon the Revelation of Heaven; not the result of conjecture, but the sure

testimony of God. Prophets and apostles have been to us his witnesses; and the voice of his Son has declared his will.

And why have we here thought of God, and Christ, and Immortality? Not, it may be hoped, as topics for curious speculation, but that we might be thereby purified, and refreshed, and elevated; that, with penitence for sin, we might come to the Father, and supplicate his forgiveness; thankful for his care, that we might pour forth our gratitude, and, conscious of his goodness, render to him adoration; — touched by the love of Jesus, that we might give him our affections; awed by his greatness, that we might bow in reverence; and, acknowledging what he has done, welcome his ministry of reconciliation. One great end of all that has here been taught has been to enforce its vital connection with life, and identify it with character.

And therefore, the great desire, through all the preaching, has been to show the just APPLICATION of truth; not to rest in vague generalities, but to bring it home to the wants of man and the conditions of the time. Thus I have endeavored to convince the sinner of his sin, showing how a coming judgment sends out the flashes of its light before him, and how God and Christ are ready to welcome his return. To the tempted, I have sought to speak with warning; to the mourner, with consolation; to the faithful, with encouragement; and to all, as far as I might be able (I know how feebly), bringing the truth to bear directly upon the mind.

So also I have felt that Christianity must be applied to the delinquencies and sins of society. Has the minister

of God any right to withhold such application? Before he speaks, shall he first ask whether what he is to say will be popular? Shall he cautiously close his eyes to evils which he knows to prevail? My brethren, is not this the very test of a minister's fidelity, that, according to his highest conviction, with prayer that he may be guided aright, he shall be TRUE? One of the most distinctly avowed purposes for which this Church was established was, that Christianity might be "applied to the heart and conscience, in all the spheres and transactions of life." It was for this purpose you invited me to come among you; and in conformity with this view, when I preached the dedication sermon at the opening of the chapel in 1846, it was said, — "The world has its corroding sins and its self-inflicted calamities. Intemperance, Slavery, and War are an iniquity and a curse. Here may active Benevolence and self-sacrificing Philanthropy gather strength; here may Sobriety, and Freedom, and Peace find constant encouragement. As the followers of Jesus, we consecrate this place to the spirit of enlightened and universal Humanity."

At the dedication of the Church, in following out the same idea, existing evils were dwelt upon more at length, and spoken of as antagonists of the gospel. It was said that the surest basis of civilization was that which was laid by Jesus Christ; that Christianity was sent for the removal of all error and sin, and with an adaptation to all ages; that it is the duty of the Church to make application of its truth to each particular age; that this age has its errors and sins; and that it is the duty of the Church, according to its best wisdom, to meet, and, as far as possi-

ble, to remove them; — that we need a philanthropy tempered and sweetened by Christian affection; — and that we dedicate this building to God, the All-Perfect; to Christ, the Messenger of the New Covenant; to the Holy Spirit, with its emanations of celestial wisdom; and to the best interests of Humanity, — to Justice, Freedom, and Love."

From the beginning I have sought to be faithful to these views; views which I have always avowed, and upon which my opinion has never changed. I have considered that one great duty of the Christian minister is to study and teach Christian truth, and to show its application to society and the soul; that, as a teacher, he is to speak what, after serious deliberation, he feels to be the truth, and to speak the truth in love.

With a sense of responsibility to God, I have earnestly asked to be guided aright; sensible that, like others, I was liable to err; yet feeling that I must use my best judgment, be faithful to the light of revelation, and follow my highest convictions of duty.

When I have spoken here, it has been as a minister of Christ, and *never* for SECTARIAN or PARTY ends. I have searched the Scriptures to know what they revealed, and what I have taught has been as from those oracles. Not in the name of a sect have I labored among you, but as a follower of Jesus; and what I have preached I have preached as a Christian man. You will bear me witness that, through seven years, I have endeavored to teach the truth of divine revelation, without reference to denominational names. The Bible has been my text-book and my guide, my shield and my buckler, my study and my joy.

It has never been my custom rudely to attack those of differing views, but to admit their liberty, and respect their rights. I have felt that each mind must study and decide for itself, and that we shall all be called to render an account to a higher Power, before whom, according to our real deserts, we must stand or fall; each needing mercy, and all to be judged, as we may hope, by the fidelity of our lives, and the purposes of our hearts, rather than the exact measure of abstract truth which we may have been able to acquire. Can we not justly prize what seems to us true, and yet have charity for others? I believe that among all denominations there may be those who are the loving children of the Heavenly Father; and, if so, shall we not feel that we are, in fact, as one flock, having one shepherd?

Neither for a Sect nor a Party have I spoken, but as a Christian, and, as I trust, with a Christian spirit, whether upon truth abstractly considered, or the application of it to the soul or to society.

Having thus briefly glanced at the general principles to which I have adhered, as a minister of the gospel, during the seven years of our union, — principles upon which this Church was established, and in connection with which it has gone from stage to stage, through the successive periods of its being, — I feel that I must now say — Farewell.

Sad to me, on many accounts, is that thought. Has not my soul glowed here with a holy love? Has not truth come to me with new power? Have I not here felt the answer to prayer? And shall I bid farewell to this place?

To the chapel where we have so often met? — to the pulpit where I have so long stood? — to the font from which the waters of baptism have been poured? — to the table where we have broken bread? But what are these that I should sorrow at leaving them? It is not the carved wood or stone, or the outward adornings, but the associations connected with them that make them dear. The sympathies enjoyed here, the hopes awakened, the experiences known, — these form the sacred tie; and these will endear the humblest place. My thoughts go back nineteen years to the little vestry, where, on the Sabbath, I first taught the children of seamen. That place was as dear to me as this. The humble roof that I could almost touch with my hand was as sacred as these lofty arches. I have ever kept those interests fresh in my heart. There is a costly Bible upon this desk; but you may have noticed that I always read from one of a simpler aspect. That plain Bible was the one I used to read from in the little vestry where I preached to the young. Afterwards I took it with me to the pleasant chapel, where, when I first preached, a Tuckerman was by my side; and, for nearly six years, I read from it to the poor who were gathered there. When I united with you, I brought it with me, and have constantly used it in this place; and now I must take it with me wherever I go. That little school-room, and the simple chapel, and this beautiful temple, are alike consecrated in my affections. It is not the edifice, but the purpose for which it is set apart, and the sympathies by which it has been hallowed, that make it dear.

Farewell to you, my friends. Many of us have been

pleasantly united through a period which is no small portion of human life. Let not the past, so filled with sacred memories, be wholly forgotten.

Farewell to the children, the lambs of the flock. Often has it been my pleasure to meet them; and I have looked forward to watching over them till they should enter upon the active duties of life. If we may not meet as often hereafter, my thoughts at least will be with them, and I shall rejoice to know of their welfare.

Farewell to the poor, whose continued affection has always been precious to me, and whom I shall always remember with peculiar interest.

Farewell to all. I am sure that many of us are bound by ties of sympathy that can never be broken. Pleasant have been the days we have passed together. Should any of you, amid the changes of life, be called to bereavement or trial, send for me at such seasons, if you desire it, — feeling that I shall still be your friend.

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace. The Lord God Almighty bless, preserve, and keep you. The Lord mercifully, with his favor, look upon you, and fill you with spiritual benediction. Peace be unto you from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Farewell.

APPENDIX.

LETTER

TO THE

COMMITTEE OF THE CHURCH OF THE SAVIOUR

FROM THE PASTOR;

WITH THE REPLY, AND THE ACTION OF THE SOCIETY.

BOSTON, MARCH 12, 1852.

TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE
CHURCH OF THE SAVIOUR.

GENTLEMEN,

Seven years have now passed since I accepted the invitation to become the Pastor of the Church with which we are mutually connected. At the close of so long a period of time, it is natural to look through the years which have elapsed, and to inquire respecting the present position of things. There has been, undeniably, much of a gratifying character; much to cheer and encourage every Christian heart. But, in common with other churches, we have had our trials. Great changes have taken place in the community, by which large numbers have removed from the city, more or less affecting every denomination. This, together with the Debt upon the Church, has acted very seriously against our growth; the latter cause repelling some persons from uniting with the Society, and disheartening those who, having given liberally, are yet called upon yearly to meet the deficiencies. In my judgment, it is not for the interest of the Society, or of religion, that this state of things should longer be continued.

It has been my endeavor, through the seven years in which we have been united, to leave nothing undone which might add to the influence and prosperity of the Church. With a deep sense of responsibility to God, I have earnestly desired to devote every energy to further the cause of the gospel. Still (while our social meetings have never been more fully attended than during the present winter, and while we have an unusually large body of communicants, as many probably as is connected with any of our

older churches) the Debt of the Church tends to paralyze our efforts, and throw such doubt over our continued existence as to discourage both pastor and people. If this debt could be paid, it would be a just cause for rejoicing; and I cannot but think that it might be accomplished by a powerful and united effort, and the extension of that same liberality which has already done so much. Then the Society would start with a fresh impulse, and I firmly believe we should have abundant reason to be satisfied with the result. The welfare of the Church, I need not say, has ever been near to my heart. It has constantly been the object of my prayer and my thought; and while there has been very much to awaken gratitude in the sympathy which has been manifested by those without our Society, and the warm affection which has been expressed by those within it, — still, under existing circumstances, and with the financial difficulties which press upon us, I feel under the painful necessity of tendering you my resignation.

To relinquish a charge to which I have devoted so many years of my life, to be separated from those with whom I have become bound by ties of sacred sympathy, is no common trial; but, unless there is on the part of the Committee and the Society an earnest wish that I should remain, and unless some measures can be devised by which the Debt, which has so injuriously affected us, shall be removed, I must ask that my connection with the Church shall end on the first day of May.

With vivid remembrance of all that has been so generously done for the Church; with sincere thanks for the kindness I have hitherto received from the Committee; and with the prayer that God may continue to bless the Church and Society with which we are mutually connected, — believe me,

With high respect and Christian affection,

Most truly yours,

R. C. Waterston.

REPLY OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE.

Boston, March 20, 1852.

Reverend and Dear Sir,

It is with feelings of disappointment and regret that the Standing Committee of the Church of the Saviour have

considered your communication to them, tendering the resignation of your pastoral office.

This is a tie of so tender and sacred a nature, that it can scarcely ever be severed without a severe struggle and bleeding hearts. We cannot but feel, however, that in our case there are peculiar circumstances, in the early formation of our Society, in the social and intimate character of our union, and, if we may say so without presumption, in the religious convictions and influences which have grown up within it, that render its dissolution more than usually painful.

In the view of such an event, our minds revert with strong emotion to all that has been pleasant in our intercouse, cordial in our regards, and improving in our public and private exercises. For so much that has been gratifying in the past existence of the Society, we feel, and are prompt to acknowledge, that much — very much — is owing to yourself; and we would fain linger on the theme, and give expression to the strong personal attachment, which nothing in the future, we are sure, can estrange, which has grown up in our hearts towards you.

In regard to the causes which have hindered our progress, and threaten our continued existence, we deem it due to truth to state, that we do not lay so much stress upon the debt which is owing from the Society, as you appear in your communication to do.

When the Society entered their new church, they had one of the most attractive and appropriate edifices in the country, with its beautiful and convenient chapel, for the sum of Thirty Thousand dollars; a sum, it need not be said, which could not have procured an ordinary building of the same capacity in any settled portion of the city; and it required only the sale of one-half the pews at their valuation to wipe off the debt, or a lease of the same proportion to take off the burthen of its interest. It would seem, therefore, that no new society could expect to enter on its existence under more favorable financial circumstances. We are of opinion that the causes of our want of adequate success lie deeper, and do not admit of so easy a solution. We can point, however, at the period at which we opened our Church, when the whole community was paralyzed by the scarcity of money and depression of business. This unforeseen state of things came like an untimely frost upon our spring-time: like the damp and chilling east winds of our northern clime, it seemed to nip our blossoming hopes, and

blight the promise of our growth. This disastrous state of things has continued, with hardly any intermission, to this day, exerting its withering power upon us.

There are other causes, too, in the condition and habits of society in our city, to which you have alluded; and these, too, probably permanent and progressive in their nature, and for this reason discouraging to our hopes. But it seems unnecessary to dwell farther upon this head: enough has been indicated to furnish you, in some measure, with the reasons which compelled the Committee unanimously to adopt the expression of opinion and the vote which you will find subjoined.

In closing this communication, we would, one and all, express to you our warm attachment and sincere respect; giving you the fullest credit for zeal and fidelity in your holy office, and for earnest endeavors to build up a strong and prosperous society, fulfilling all the purposes for which it was commenced, by promoting religious sensibility and a godly life in its members, and forming a centre from which the best influences should be exerted on society around.

And now, Reverend and Dear Sir, we would commend you and your future lot to the Divine Disposer, with our best wishes in your behalf, and our prayers to Him that He would sustain your steps and strengthen your heart; and, if a separation should take place, that he would, in his own good time, set you in some other vineyard, where his work shall be fully prospered in your hands.

A true copy from the Record.

Attest, F. C. MANNING,
Clerk *pro tem.*

The Standing Committee of the Church of the Saviour, having taken into consideration the communication of the Pastor, are of opinion, that, inasmuch as the Society has now on hand pews unsold to the amount of Forty-five Thousand dollars, they cannot believe that any other means of raising the amount of the debt of Seventeen Thousand dollars than the sale of those pews is wise or expedient to be adopted; nor do they believe that any such attempt would be successful. They, therefore, consider that his resignation must be laid before the Society for their action.

Voted, that the Chairman be requested to direct the Clerk to call a meeting of the Society at the chapel, on Tuesday, 30th inst.

A true copy of the Record.

Attest, F. C. MANNING,
Clerk *pro tem.*

The above letter and vote were adopted at an adjourned meeting of the Standing Committee of the Church of the Saviour, held March 21, 1852. Present: JAMES JOHNSON, HENRY B. ROGERS, WM. T. ANDREWS, G. W. WARREN, J. C. BURRAGE, J. T. PRINCE, and F. C. MANNING;

WM. T. ANDREWS presiding.

REPORT OF A COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY THE SOCIETY, MARCH 30, READ AND ACCEPTED AT A MEETING DULY CALLED, APRIL 13, 1852;

WM. B. SPOONER presiding.

The Committee appointed at the last meeting of the Society to take into consideration the subject there presented, and to ascertain what measures and action our present circumstances admit of, beg leave to REPORT, that —

They have called upon the present members of the Congregation who are *not* pew-owners, and who could be expected to purchase pews, and have endeavored to ascertain what numbers can be added to our present congregation, and, as far as possible, to ascertain the views and feelings of its present members, in regard to our present position; — the result of which is, that they find a strong affection existing towards our Pastor, and a disposition to some extent to take pews, and also that those who have pews are willing to contribute still further to extinguish the debt, on condition that the church could be filled and carried on successfully; but, owing to the fact that there are, in our immediate vicinity, FIVE churches of our own denomination which are thinly attended, we are compelled to come to the conclusion, that we have too many churches to insure us a full congregation, and the success that could be wished for. And, inasmuch as the taking of the pews and the discharging of the debt is dependent upon this point, and from reasons set forth, we do not see that they can be obviated, except by a union with some other Society;

and as Mr. Waterston's letter in effect makes it incumbent upon us to accept his resignation, unless the difficulties now existing shall be removed, we can only recommend, with regret, that the same be accepted; and would also beg leave to express our entire confidence in the ability and talent of our Pastor to build up and sustain a Society under more auspicious circumstances than exist with us.

Although it may be departing somewhat from the especial business assigned to them, the members of the Committee are unwilling to close their Report, without an expression of their feelings towards our beloved and respected Pastor. They wish to express their high appreciation of the ability, zeal, and fidelity with which he has discharged the duties of his office; and the opinion that the want of success is not to be attributed to deficiencies on his part, but to the circumstances heretofore stated in the Report.

And they are happy also to add, that, in their calls upon various members of the Society, they have witnessed the same strong attachment to our Pastor, and the same high appreciation of his services, and a steady confidence in his ability to carry on the Society successfully, were it not for the unfavorable external circumstances with which we are surrounded.

Respectfully submitted.

(Signed) JAMES H. BEAL,
ISAAC H. CARY,
PETER G. MUNROE,
E. E. DAVISON,
WM. B. SPOONER,
Committee of the Society.

BOSTON, April 13, 1852.

LETTER TO THE PASTOR, BY THE COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIETY.

BOSTON, APRIL 20, 1852.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

At a meeting of the Society of the "Church of the Saviour," held on the evening of the 30th ultimo, we were appointed a Committee to ascertain whether it was practicable to raise the funds requisite to cancel the debt now existing upon the church, and thus remove the obstacle to your continuance with us as a Pastor.

We devoted considerable time and solicitude to the subject, and gave the result of our efforts, in a Report, to the meeting of the Society on Tuesday evening last. A copy of that Report we herewith enclose you. In doing this, we beg leave to assure you that the reasons which brought us to this result are truly stated in that Report, and are *not* to be attributed to *any* other cause whatsoever.

We believe that the obstacles to the prosperity and success of the Society are not likely to be overcome by the substitution of any other person than yourself as Pastor of the Church, and also that the circumstances stated in the Report furnish an insurmountable obstacle to the permanent and lasting success of the Society under whosoever is likely to be placed over it.

We believe there is NOT ROOM ENOUGH for a Society of our faith in the vicinity in which our church is located; in proof of which it is only necessary to look at the changes that have taken place in that section of the city within a few years past, — at the depopulation of its Protestant native inhabitants, through large districts, by the encroachments of trade, and by a foreign population, few or none of whom are of our faith. In a small circuit in the city, we find existing FIVE Unitarian churches, where there is but *one* of each of those numerous and powerful sects, the Orthodox and Baptist. The history of our Society shows, that the tide of emigration from the city to the country has carried with it a large number of families belonging to us; and while there may have been, now and then, an individual, we have yet to learn of a family, that has left us from dissatisfaction with the ministrations of our Pastor.

We therefore believe, that, while there have been circumstances of a varied character, which have operated unfavorably to the growth of our Society, established as it was upon a somewhat peculiar principle, the great hindrance to our success has been the large number of churches in our immediate vicinity (some of whom, although of longer standing, are, we believe, more thinly attended than our own), and the rapid diminution of the native population in the immediate neighborhood.

The meeting of the Society (to which that above referred to was adjourned to act upon our Report), in charging us with the duty of communicating to you its acceptance, also distinctly intrusted us with the expression of its lively sense of the union, and most remarkable and unquestioned unanimity of purpose which,

from the first, has actuated Pastor and People in forwarding the best interests and growth of the Society; and to convey to you, likewise, in conformity with the manifestations of our own feelings in submitting our Report, their deep regret that the ties, which have so long bound us together as Pastor and People, in strong affection and regard, must be severed.

Some of us have been with you from the first organization of the Church and Society, and have shared with you its prosperity and its trials; and we have *all* witnessed the *ability*, *zeal*, and *deep devotion* which you have given to the duties of your office; and, though our Society is small in numbers, we have rejoiced in the great success which has attended your efforts in gathering into the visible church, souls which, we trust, you will find in the great day numbered among the spiritual members of the Church above, to be your eternal crown of rejoicing.

We do not for a moment indulge the thought that the termination of your labors with us is to end your labors in the ministry. We doubt not that your services will be demanded, and that you will find some other sphere of action, where your spirit will meet a ready welcome, and where you may reap an abundant harvest of souls.

With our best wishes for the happiness of yourself and family, and with assurances of our high respect and affection,

We remain, dear Sir,

Most sincerely and truly your friends,

(Signed) JAS. H. BEAL,
W. B. SPOONER,
P. G. MUNROE,
ELIAS E. DAVISON,
ISAAC H. CARY,
Committee appointed by the Society.

NOTE.

The Church, with land, furniture, and chapel, cost		$70,002.78
The pews in the centre aisle were apprized at	$25,900.00	
The remaining pews at	34,500.00	
In all		$60,400.00

Subscriptions were originally received to the amount of somewhat over $40,000.00 for which scrip was given, and upon which nothing has been returned.

The Debt upon which interest is to be paid is about $17,000.00; to meet which, $1,000 must be raised annually, in addition to the current expenses of the Society.